

ANOMIE

Anarchy in the 21st Century
Issue 1 - Winter 2019

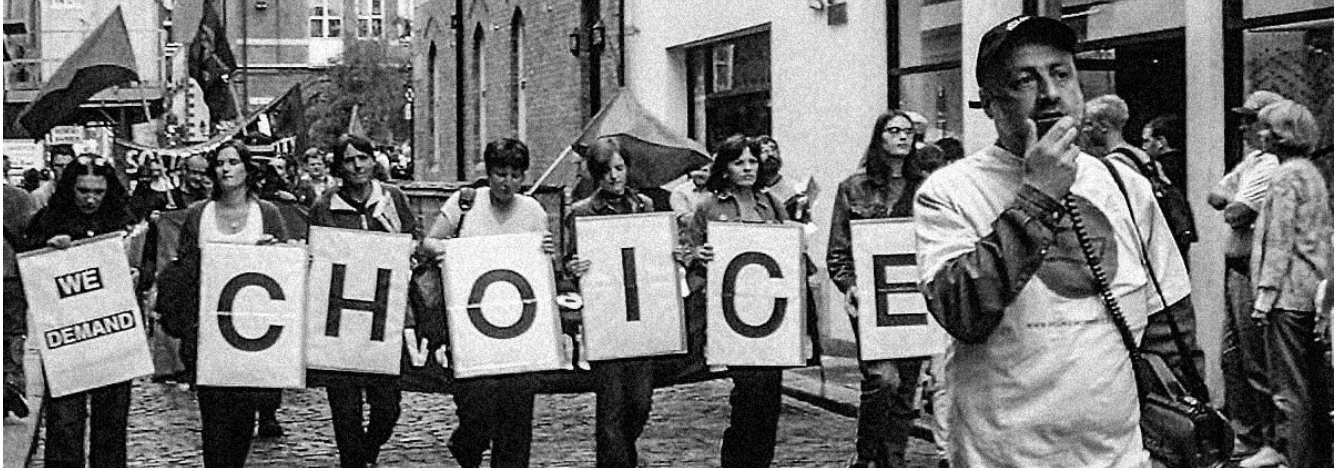


What is Anomie?

The French sociologist Émile Durkheim labelled Anomie the feeling of purposelessness caused by a breakdown in traditional structures that govern society. This is the abiding feeling of our time. In this interregnum it is up to Anarchists to question every and all of our sacred cows. Those behind this publication meet bi-weekly in Dublin city to challenge Anarchism to be more relevant. We discuss and debate the issues of the day and read great thinkers of the past. We hope this publication provokes you enough to attend our meetings or even better start your own group of inveterate cynics.

Solidarity!

Special thanks to all contributors of this issue.
Issue 1 is dedicated to Alan MacSimoin.



Dedicated to the memory of our friend Alan MacSimoin

It was with some reluctance that I set out over a year ago to start a new Anarchist reading group in Dublin. There was already a myriad of Left wing sects and cults across the city and as many haters online ready to mock it. The night of the first meeting my stomach was making all the wrong noises and I was terrified that I'd arrive to either an empty pub or even worse a sectarian harranging. I found neither.

Instead I saw the beaming face of the Gandalf of Irish Anarchism, Alan MacSimoin. I had first met him during my

student days in Trinity when he was working in the History Department. At that point I was in the midst of an ill-advised Trotskyist period but we bonded over a shared cynical sense of humour. I think looking back it was those initial playful and kind discussions with Alan that sent me down the road of Anarchism. For that I will always thank him and curse him in equal measure!

As our little group got started Alan's frequent presence and vast knowledge of Anarchist theory, the history of Irish activism, and the Spanish Revolution, helped give the group an air of credibility that it no doubt lacked. His vibrant conversation style, humour and intellect drew in many of the regulars that are now combining their talents to put out this very zine. For that I cannot thank him enough.

Rest in Power my friend!



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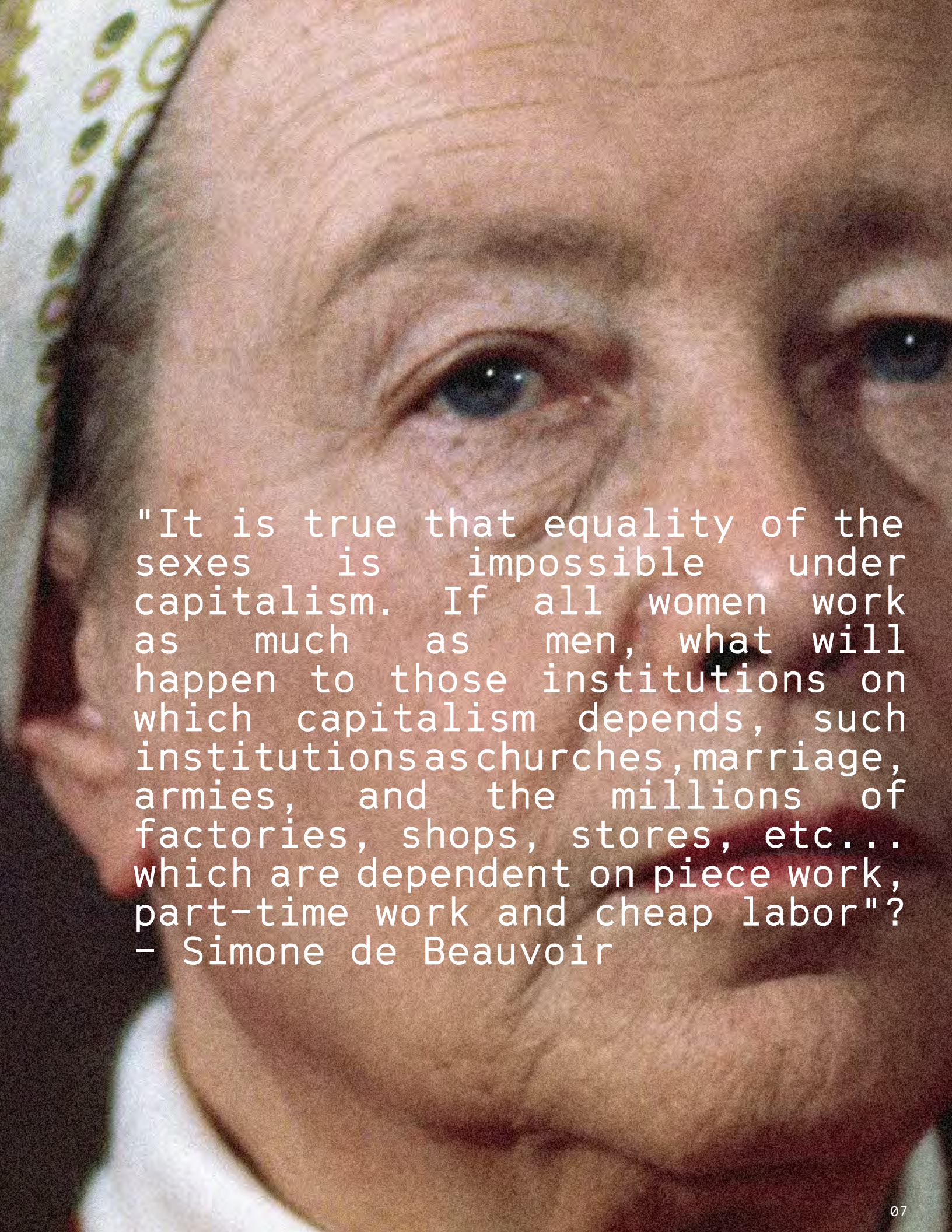
By Danai Spyrou

Anarchism is Female-Gendered

In theory our (capitalist) society is governed under the principle that gender is different but equal. This principle, however, appears quite problematic from the beginning; why does sexism exist? The "pay gap"? Shocking numbers of sexual assaults and rapes against women? Cat-calling? Abortion-shaming? Transgender discrimination? The notion that society's attitude towards women is unfair and oppressive is just a small fraction, or even better, a symptom of a deeply and polarised society, that challenges and re-defines women's existence and bodies, rendering unto them a state of constant war in order to defend and vindicate their rights.

The article has been submitted on anomiezone.com on the 16th of February, 2019.

<https://anomiezone.com/2019/02/16/anarchism-is-female-gendered/>

A close-up, high-contrast portrait of Simone de Beauvoir. Her face is the central focus, with her eyes looking slightly to the right. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows on the left side of her face and forehead. She has a serious, contemplative expression. Her skin is wrinkled, and her hair is dark and pulled back. A portion of a patterned headscarf is visible on the left edge of the frame.

"It is true that equality of the sexes is impossible under capitalism. If all women work as much as men, what will happen to those institutions on which capitalism depends, such institutions as churches, marriage, armies, and the millions of factories, shops, stores, etc... which are dependent on piece work, part-time work and cheap labor"?
- Simone de Beauvoir

Feminist scholar Simone de Beauvoir eloquently touched upon the issues of sexism and gender inequality under capitalism. For de Beauvoir, gender class is class struggle. And capitalist society is dependent on class exploitation. Looking back at what the struggle for women's liberation has achieved in many societies throughout the world over the last 100 years, where radical improvements for women rights, as well as a deeper understanding of gender roles and social expectations have taken place, one can observe on the whole that, sexism and patriarchy have been crystallised into a Foucaultian dispositif. It is more invisible than before, but the power relations appear too rigid to collapse.

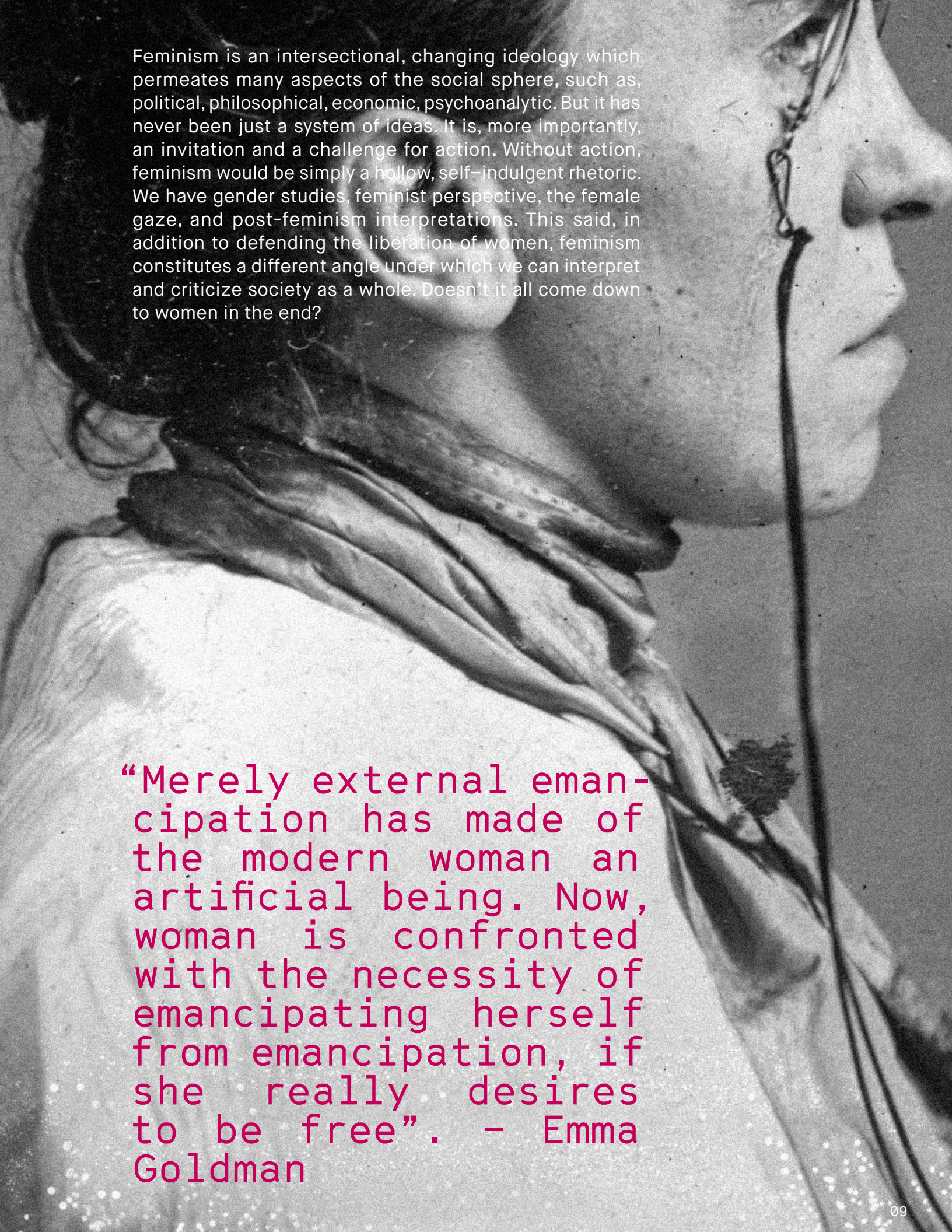
I was reading an article the other day on voidnetwork.gr¹ about how women are more financially vulnerable than men. Under capitalism, childbearing is women's responsibility. The biological role of women means that (provided they have children) they should abstain at least some time away from their paid employment. Their biological role also makes them ultimately responsible for any child they give birth to. Consequently, paid maternity leave, single parent allowance, parental leave, leave to care for sick children, free kindergarten and childcare facilities, etc., they will always be exclusively issues for women.

Battles over custody, childcare services, single parenting, and so on, always affect women more than men. Yet, without full economic equality, it is difficult to put an end to the unequal power relation between women and men and the ideology of sexism associated with them. Thus, although capitalism could

adjust equality between women and men, the reality is that full realization of this equality is quite unlikely to be achieved under capitalism. This is simply because there is a financial penalty linked to women's biology that makes the profitable capitalist society inherently biased against women.

The right to abortion is another soft spot. It isn't arbitrary to say that, the biggest adversaries of abortions are men. Their tactics vary from merciless witch-hunting, where they target women who have undergone abortion by calling them murderers, that they will burn in hell, etc., to cyber-bullying, organising and coordinating protests outside planned parenthood clinics with the most horrendous graphic signs. Of course, governments only add insult to injury. In countries like Poland where the government outlawed abortion after decades of liberal legislation or Argentina and its dashing disappointing referendum on abortions. In other countries, like Greece for example, the voices of pro-life advocates are becoming more and more strong, it seems that despite the long history for women's liberation, the progress is not linear and that liberation won't be gained only "in time". There are still many lingering norms and stereotypes, even within more liberated movements, that we need to uproot so that we can move towards a free, autonomous society, where each person respects the freedom and independence of the other. So far, gender inequality issues are buried with excuses such as "it's not the time", "there are more urgent issues to solve", "they're outdated, since things are better than before", "they are exaggerations of feminists who want to cast off men" or "the feminist claims divide and break the the movement".

¹ <http://voidnetwork.gr/φεμινισμός-και-επαναστατικό-κίνημα-ο>



Feminism is an intersectional, changing ideology which permeates many aspects of the social sphere, such as, political, philosophical, economic, psychoanalytic. But it has never been just a system of ideas. It is, more importantly, an invitation and a challenge for action. Without action, feminism would be simply a hollow, self-indulgent rhetoric. We have gender studies, feminist perspective, the female gaze, and post-feminism interpretations. This said, in addition to defending the liberation of women, feminism constitutes a different angle under which we can interpret and criticize society as a whole. Doesn't it all come down to women in the end?

“Merely external emancipation has made of the modern woman an artificial being. Now, woman is confronted with the necessity of emancipating herself from emancipation, if she really desires to be free”. – Emma Goldman

By Luke Goodall

We can do a better job than you, it's obvious

We don the black from head to toe
Because we are your ugly shadow
Brought to life by force of will
A golum raised of dirt and blood
We do not fear your guns,
Prisons, or your tanks
It is your temples, schools and banks
Which shake us to our bones
You can hang us, starve us, rape us,
shoot us,
Beat us, drown us, gas us, stone us,
And we will scratch and bite and trash
and fight
We will laugh and dance and scream and shout.
We will win, no matter what you try
Because when the debts are settled we
will have survived
Because We are the growers, the makers, the builders, the mothers,
the fixers, the porters, the cleaners, The Mob.
You may be the owners
Of the Machine
But we know how it works,
And how it won't.

We are here and we are your children
And we demand recompense for what has been stolen
You build up your profits and build up your privilege
Use them as walls with which to divide us.
Keep out the commoner, keep out the riff- raff,
the native, the dalit, the serf,
Keep the under-dog where they belong
Send them back to where they come from
Engineer obedience with threats and treats
Because good dogs don't bite back.

But we aren't dogs, we're germs.
We are your sickness, your maladies,
your disease.
A gangrene of your ethics
The AIDS of your moral right
We are your plague, your pestilence, your plight
We come bearing gifts of destruction and renewal
In neat little packages addressed to you
We can no longer move in the darkness
With fascists out there stealing our likeness
We're watching you daesh,
We're watching you klan,
Britain First, AfD and Identitarians
We are coming and you can't fight us
You might have the guns,
But we've got the plans
And we only need our hands.

"What plans are those?", some might ask,
That would be telling but I'll give you some clues
To walk alone on our own path,
To call no thing sacred,
And no person master.
To offer our hand to those who need
With what-ever help we can provide.
To see others as equals with their own desires
And to do the least harm whilst satisfying ours.
To defend ourselves and any who cannot
Against those who would choose our thoughts.
To spread the wealth of this world
To every corner of every household.
To live as part of this planet
Not apart from it.

A starving child needs no laptop
The war orphan needs no coke
The rape victim needs no lipstick
And we plebs need more than hope.
It ain't easy being green
But smashing is what we do.
The state, the banks, the cops, the cults.
Names on the list and first against the wall.
The patriarchs, the oligarchs,
the hoarders of power
Every second that passes brings closer
Your final hour.

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By Alex O'Fhailghigh

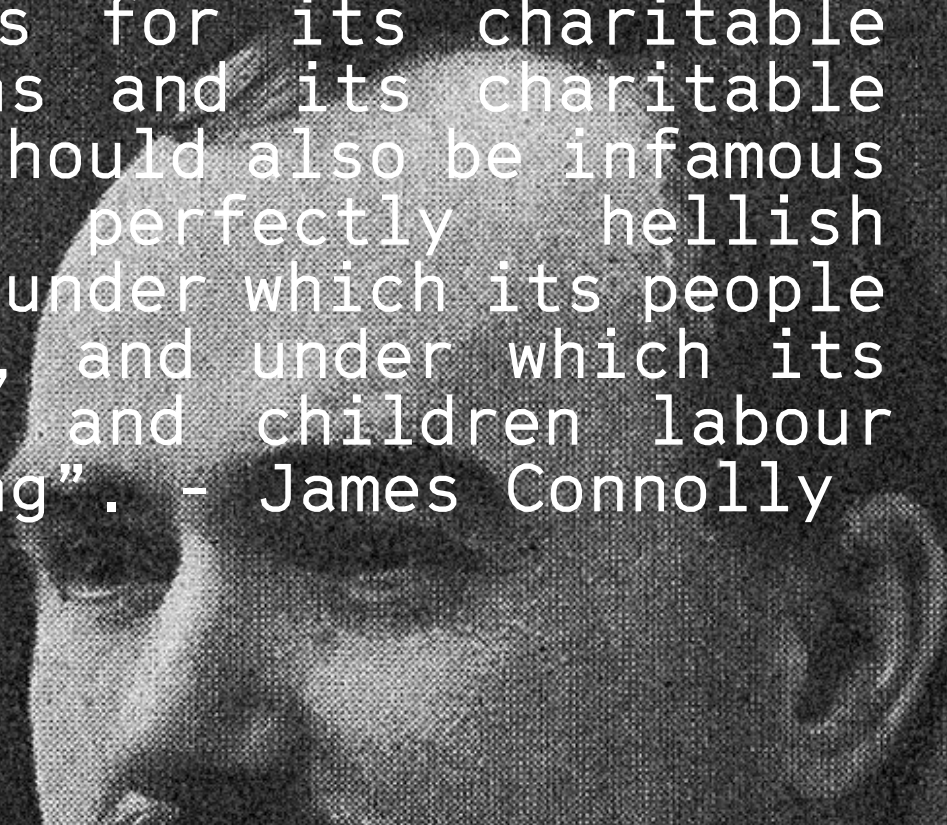
A Landlord's paradise

Ireland has a disordered relationship with property. We prize it above life itself. To have land is to have power; the more land one has, the more power one wields. There are effectively two classes of people in Ireland; those with property and those without, and increasingly the latter are the young and the poor. This realization came to me recently as I stared up at the ceiling of my rented 3x4 metre bedsit, price tag 700 euro. A stream of water was pouring through a large and mouldy hole into a well-placed bucket beneath. Having already reported this health hazard several times, I found myself perplexed as to why nothing had been done to prevent me catching consumption. Then it came to me, rather belatedly for an Irish History graduate, Ireland is a Landlord's paradise.

This was not always the case. You don't have to go back that far in history to find a rather different view of property. As recently as the mid-19th century most communities on the west coast of Ireland lived in small autonomous village communities called Clachans and effectively shared the lands that surrounded these settlements, in a system known as Rundale. Each family had

multiple strips of land that were worked collectively and for landless labourers there was common land to farm and feed their cattle.

This was an old system, pre-dating the arrival of either Tudor power in 15th century or even the Normans in the 12th. There may have been local Irish Lords with deep family ties in the area, but in theory they didn't "own" the land, the clan did. While much of this was destroyed on the east coast in 17th century, it survived on the west coast until the cataclysm of the Great Famine. During which, the overwhelming majority of the 1 million evicted, 1.4 million killed and 2.1 million refugees fleeing were poor farmers and landless labourers who had lived in such communities. The reasons for this are well understood, the British state saw these communities as lazy and lacking in Protestant entrepreneurial spirit and, as such, refused to aid them when a blight destroyed their main food supply, the potato. In the words of Charles Trevelyan, the main in charge of famine relief: "The judgement of God sent the calamity to teach the Irish a lesson that calamity, must not be too much mitigated".



“Ireland is a country of wonderful charity and singularly little justice. And Dublin, being an epitome of Ireland, it is not strange to find that Dublin, a city famous for its charitable institutions and its charitable citizens, should also be infamous for the perfectly hellish conditions under which its people are housed, and under which its men, women and children labour for a living”. - James Connolly

The crimes of the British state at that time are well known, what is less known and more important to the story of how Ireland got to where it is today, is the crimes of a rising middle class of Irish farmers and landlords. This middle class has its origins in the Leinster cattle herders and strong farmers of the 18th century. During the Famine a large minority of those evicted off their lands were evicted as sub-tenants of a Catholic middle class. By the 1870s a Land War began to seize control of the land from the corrupt Anglo-Irish gentry, but sadly it was not led by the victims of the Famine, now living in New York and Boston, but rather the very middling farmers that had reaped the rewards of now de-populated lands on the west coast. They had done very well from Ireland's tragedy and now using their political representatives in the Irish Party and the Land League forced the government in London to agree to a radical proposal, to buy out the Anglo-Irish and sell their land to the new power in the land, the middle class Catholic farmers. Several land acts were passed between 1882 and 1903, that by 1920 put 80% of what became the Irish Republic

was in the hands of this new powerful class. After independence much of the final 20% was bought by the Irish state. The price being the further undermining of landless labourers. The great historian David FitzPatrick charted the death of the rural labourer in much of his research, but it is truly astonishing. By 1900 the population had dropped to 4 million, from 8.8 million in 1845. Landless labourers had once been 80% of the population, by the beginning of 20th century they were less than 20%. Over the course of the 19th century and early 20th perhaps 12 million Irish poor had fled the country. Even before the advent of the Irish Free State we had become a Landlord's Paradise. Indeed, there was little radical about the Irish War of Independence. It was effectively the newly comfortable sons of the middle-class farmers demanding a different colour flag and different language and accent for the wealthy.

Meanwhile, in Dublin a cosy cartel of Catholic and Protestant landlords gained dominance by 1840s and have never ceased being the most powerful voices in the city. One need only look at how long the tenement period lasted in the capital to understand who this society is engineered for. The first mention of the slum problem was made as early as 1799. By 1818 reports began to appear of chronic overcrowding and rack renting in the working-class districts of the Liberties. Oscar Wilde's father, Lord William Wilde, even wrote extensively on it for the first census in 1841

and yet nothing would be done for the best part of 150 years to heal the weeping sore of the tenements. All the while you had half to a third of the population living in third world conditions. The average life expectancy in Dublin in the late 19th century was 5, with an infant mortality rate of 62%. The average tenement room was 3x4 metres, with the average family having 12-24 children. They lived in what were agreed even by the British Parliament to be the worst slums in Europe at the time. All the while the comfy middle class lived in their newly established townships of Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar, free from tax obligations to the poor of Dublin city, who they sucked dry with obscene rack renting. It would not be until 1930s that (ironically) a Fianna Fail government extended the tax base to the suburbs and began the process of building council homes in Crumlin and Ballyfermot. It would take another generation and severe public pressure before the landlord parties graced us with the Housing Act of 1966, which could be said to have wiped out the Dublin slums by 1979.

As you see, none of this is ancient history. As Edmund Burke once said: "*those who do not know history are destined to repeat it*" and repeat it we have. The Celtic Tiger boom and crash put property speculators back in a position of unimaginable power. The average price of a home in Dublin increased by 400% in just a generation, and within the last 3 years the price has increased 25%. The common narrative



is that we are lacking in housing due to the crash of 2008, and indeed the figures are startling: 10,000 people in homeless accommodation, 150 sleeping rough on the streets of the capital and 170,000 on the council waiting lists. Look deeper, however, and you'll see the truth. Today in Ireland there are 220,000 unoccupied homes of which 16,000 are in Dublin and yet, apparently, we have a "Housing Crisis". This does not include the 5,000 flats and houses have been taken off the private rental market in Dublin for AirBnB tourists.

So, when you see hundreds of people lining up to see a flat on the news, ask yourself why does the newsreader never query why another hotel or student accommodation is being put up instead of desperately needed council housing? For this audience I don't think I need spell it out why a highly paid RTE stooge wouldn't point out that obvious point. Instead I'll ask you to please refrain from employing the propaganda phrase of "Housing Crisis", because it's not, this is exactly what you'd expect of a state built as a Landlord's Paradise.


By David O'Donoghue

The precarity of Larkin has returned for Irish workers: So too must his Syndicalism

Everything old is new again. It used to be at the turn of the century you'd show up at the docks, shivering and starving, and find out if you'd have work that day or not. If so you'd grind out a twelve hour day and hopefully go away with enough money in your pocket to tide you over the days when you weren't so lucky, if not you'd tramp on home to your last shillings stretch. In the 21st century the Irish worker, especially the young Irish worker, has returned to much the same situation, only now we have to perform the emotional labour of smiling while we show up a day before the work week to find a rapidly diminishing "if and when" roster as we count out the pennies to meet our ever-increasing rent payments. Or, in an even more dystopian fashion, a little app on our phone chirps beneath the memes and news headlines of impending global ecological disaster and tells us that our side gig delivering stale noodles on bikes won't be providing us with an income stream this week. There has been a tendency to talk about the suddenly very hot topic of precarious labour (including zero-hours contracts, bogus self-employed and other neat tricks of the 21st century capitalist) as some radically new phenomenon in the development of the post-industrial economy. At its bleakest edges this newness

even gets glossed as somehow "trendy", the so-called "gig economy" reflecting a 21st century employee who isn't held down by the convention of the 9-5; a bold entrepreneur going her own way. Neither, of course, is she bound by such fetters as employment laws, proper rest periods or the right to appropriate representation. But precarious employment is merely an old enemy in new clothing, an ancient enemy of the labour movement and working people everywhere, now kitted out in a Supreme hoodie and an app-store makeover. But its dimensions remain the same as that of the precariousness faced by turn of the century dock workers and informal agricultural labourers, the only difference being that the bosses have learned a lot more about "branding" and "manufacturing consent" since then and know how to sell us our own slavery as freedom.

The modern Irish worker facing precarity may take little comfort in the historical precedence of her condition when the landlord comes knocking but if she understands what resulted from the last age of precarity and mass insecurity she may just take heart and courage from her forerunners. It was out of the precarity of the Irish labour force in the period up to and including the



“Dockers had no secure contracts, but effectively had to haggle each day for the right to be hired and had no set rate for the work they did. They were to be unsurprisingly receptive to the message of militant trade unionism”. – Jim Larkin, 1907 Dockers Strike

www.theirishstory.com/2018/06/15/the-belfast-dockers-and-carters-strike-of-1907/

independence struggle that one of Europe's most unique labour movements was born. Where other European labour movements, such as that of Britain or Germany, emerged out of skilled tradesmen and in a more orthodoxly Marxist mould with parliamentary ambitions, the largely unskilled nature of much of the Irish workforce, comparable by contemporaries to the composition and effect of the transient workforce of the American West, built something unique. Anarchist modes of union organizing, although this syndicalism was rarely named explicitly as such, predominated and spoke to the insecure worker's hunger for direct action over complex theorizing and party-building. Larkin, and the "Larkinism" spoke of with venom by the bosses, was the most obvious manifestation. Anyone who still maintains scraps of junior cert history could recall the immortalized, mythologized image of Larkin, his hands raised in defiance, spurring on workers with the belief that direct action and the militant industrial union were to be the alleviation of the misery of thousands.

But the story and strategies stretch far beyond the mythic idol of 'Big Jim' or the even more lionized Connolly. Outside the narrow confines of mainstream and mythologized history lies the true source of the less recognized militant labour

struggles of the turn of the century. The large percentage of the Irish workforce outside of the major industrial cities found in the immediacy, romance and rank-and-file emphasis of syndicalism a form of socialist and industrial action that was compatible with the underdeveloped economies, precarious labour and tight-knit social organization of small Irish towns and villages. In the words of labour historian Emmett O'Connor it was the most isolated, precarious and unskilled workers of Ireland, tilling fields in small towns and villages, that would "[embody] the style and spirit of syndicalism...becom[ing] to the ITGWU as the migrant labourers of the Western States of America were to the IWW". Anarcho-syndicalist organisers from the Larkin's ITGWU to the short-lived Knights of the Plough were able to organize these traditionally difficult to reach precarious workers with their rank-and-file emphasis, fiery oratory and near-mystical, visionary style of unionism. Those insecure workers disregarded by both the social democratic and nascent Bolshevik organisers alike were the bread and butter of syndicalist militancy in Ireland, staging militant action and sympathetic strikes that shut down small towns, established Soviets and workers' councils and led to major concessions from the bosses.

Many of the mainstream Irish unions are in retreat and disarray. Membership is dropping and social partnership proved a too cosy surrender to the bosses and the state. They lack the vision, organizational methods and experience to organize a new generation of precarious workers on delivery bikes, in coffee shops and in call centres. These old, conservative giants wrestle with the question of what is "precarity" in lengthy lectures in their large union halls, while syndicalist organisers like the IWW in Britain take action. The closed shop and social partnership are factors which bred union conservatism and disengagement by the rank and file, especially in the private sector. Many workers saw union bureaucrats cosying up to officers of the state and employers' associations and became disillusioned, no longer believing that, as Larkin emphasized, *"we try to make our...life focus around the union"*. The union hall was no longer the thriving venue of art, education, song and mobilization that the syndicalists emphasized but merely another drab, bureaucratic building where greying officials who spent more time with employers and government ministers than they did rank-and-file workers would meet to swap old war stories and recapture the radicalism of their youth as it dissipated. Only the strident militancy and vision of the dockworkers and tenant farmers syndicalism can save us in this new age of insecurity. Only syndicalists can move beyond the narrow confines of a unionism where workers meet their





official twice a year, pray for a small pay rise and forget about the union otherwise, even in their greatest movements of misery. Syndicalists demand not just a wage increase or a working hours decrease but rather we demand the world. We demand labour's rightful share of the whole of the earth, the maintenance of her ecology and the democratic right of communities to control the work and society necessary on the face of her. Our opportunity is now and, in service of our vision, we must unearth the old ways and give them new life. We must present the old view of the union as an incubator of a new kind of society, as self-educational tool of working people, and the primary instrument of expanding democracy and defeating poverty and want.

We must inject this view, in speech and song and subversive, shushed conversation, in every call centre, takeaway and coffee shop in the country. We must agitate and organize and we must win.

We must make everything old new again.

"I can go weeks or months without work. The last time I got work was in August. So I'm on Jobseeker's because of the lack of hours. I had a number of shifts planned for the end of this month, but they have been cancelled. They can just take the shift away whenever they want, as long as they give you notice, and you don't get paid anything". - Andrew at the Irish Times

www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/we-re-young-we-re-working-but-we-re-not-employed-1.3269902

By O.P.

Anarchism and the modern precariat: a dysfunctional tryst

This essay was prompted by a personal circumstance: a dissatisfaction with what the working world had to offer me, a recent graduate. In this essay, I will try to define who the modern precariat are, what position they hold in modern, Irish society and what they can do to mitigate the isolation, frustration and anguish these modern disaffected will face.

At a basic level, the precariat can be defined as a social class formed by people suffering from precarity, which is a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare. It is a term anchored in the 21st century, where our *"hypercapitalist, technocratic society has sufficiently blurred public, work and leisure spaces to deprive us of a real-world, local community who have shared values and a sense of solidarity"* (Lipovetsky, 2007). The precariat in this era are the highly-educated, globally mobile and digitally adept, who have grown up in a world of collapsing borders and collapsing welfare systems.

The precariat is, therefore, what the 'baby-boomer' tabloid journalists call 'millennials'. A generation demeaned with terms like "spoiled" and "lazy". It is also a generation with the highest rate of mental illness, self-harm and suicide, a generation without a community and with a fraught present (zero-hour contracts, non-unionized work) and future (Catastrophic man-made climate change, digitisation of the work force, the rise of far-right populism). While our grandparents' generation had the church* and trade unions around which they built their communities (in Ireland, at least), and our parents had a job market with the promise of a stable, global market had expanded or the welfare state before Reaganomics, we the precariat have neither community, job security nor a stable welfare state, and many feel hopeless and frustrated.

Why?

* While the child abuse scandals in both the Irish State, and the Catholic Church in general has proven to be a fatal abuse of power, the fact that so many of our grandparents generation still attend mass is proof of this.

“Until recently poverty described traditionally stable and identifiable social groups that were able to subsist thanks to local solidarities. This era is over... Victims of social invalidation and of individual difficulties and situations, the new unaffiliated emerge in a society at once brutally unequal and hyper-individualist”.

– Gilles Lipovetsky

Lipovetsky, Gilles. 2007. *La felicidad paradójica. Ensayo sobre la sociedad hiperconsumista*, Anagrama, Barcelona.

While social media can leave some feeling atomized and isolated, for others it allows greater communication with different communities across the world. While there is no replacement for face-to-face contact, feelings of isolation in the age of social media is just a symptom of a much-wider problem. That problem is neo-liberal capitalism, which seeks to disempower and marginalise people from each other while, at the same time, harnessing their work for ever diminishing wages and enticing ever-more capital by appealing to a feeling of belonging to a community (Nike employing "community" managers to boost brand identification, LGBT community brand managers), which is done merely to raise brand loyalty, not to engender friendship between people. This does a disservice to the citizens of the 21st century who have increasingly grown up in hermetically-sealed, state-approved groups, be they brands, political parties or weak, increasingly niche online communities (e.g. Bronies, Cosplay and League of Ireland fans) who rarely meet in person and are, therefore, politically and socially marginalised, ignored

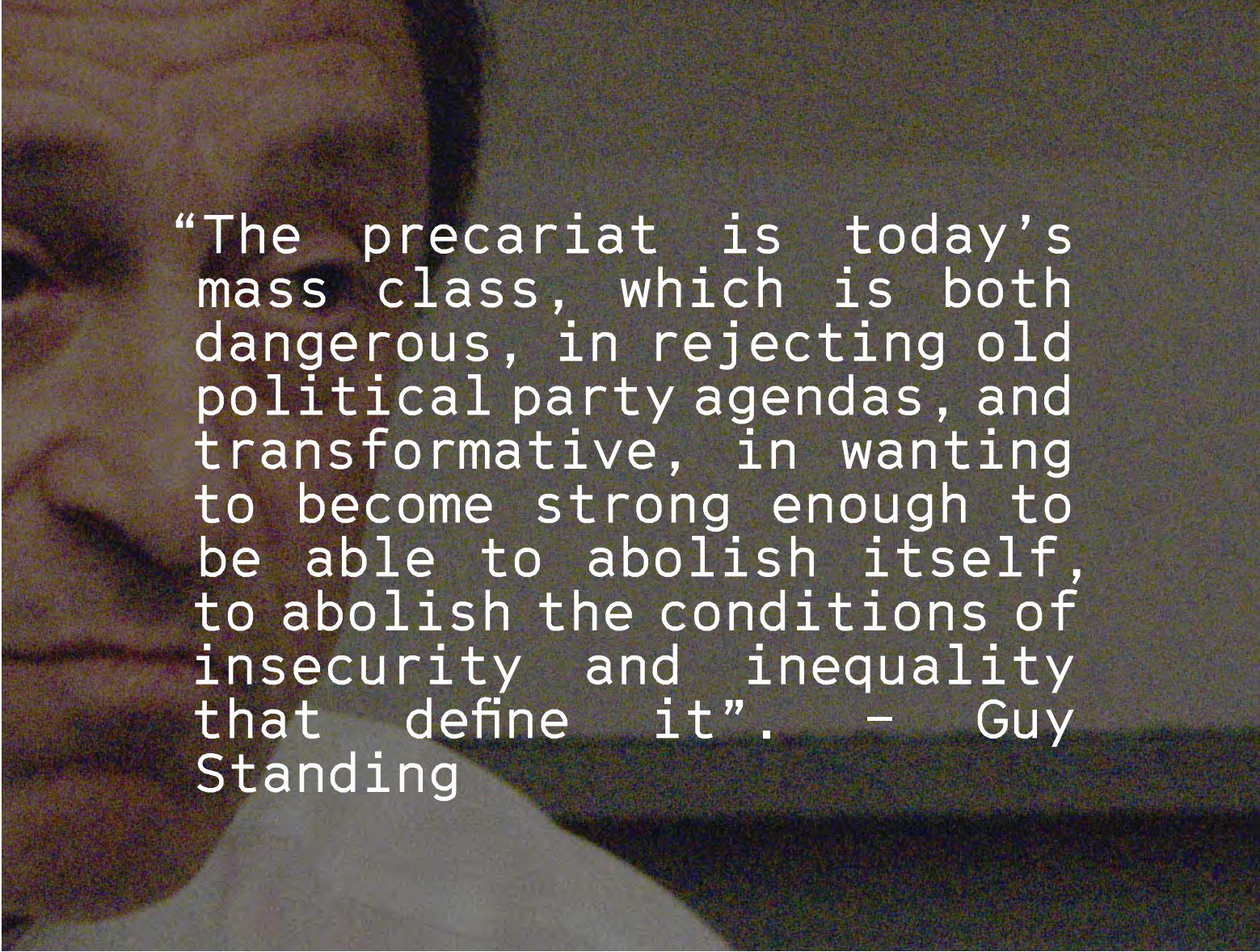
by political elites and exploited by a callous financial system.

This precariat is both being failed by modern capitalist society and the Left-wing. The politics in this country reflects this outdated approach to tackling the problems of bygone eras: trade unions are not fit for the purpose of protecting precariat workers, or indeed for the modern working world (Mancilla, 2008). Even the Marxist terminology is tiresome and in need of a reconceptualization: describing a member of the precariat as a "Lumpenproletariat" is both deeply offensive, and also smacks of old-boy elitism (that we have read Marx, understand "their" plight using 19th century terms, and therefore are more suitable for leading a revolution on Capitalism and ease "their" suffering). It is doomed to fail. Why not modernise the terminology to be inclusive? Capitalism seeks to divide, why should alternatives to capitalism also seek this? We need a modern political alternative to the civil-war era parties, and the anaemic Labour party, PBP (in Ireland, the Labour party serves as legitimacy for Fianna Fáil/Fine Gael to usher

in more neoliberal policies that have allowed landlords to largely pillage rents, our health service to be defunded and be "saved" by the private sector and social welfare checks to cruelly deprive vulnerable people of a safety net. PBP uses old-fashioned, Marxist critiques of a Capitalism that no longer exists and is therefore not relevant).

What can the proletariat do, when facing the dehumanising practices of Neoliberal hyper-capitalism, and the apathy of

traditional left-wing actions? The first thing is to build our own communities—we meet every second Wednesday in the Library Bar, info here: www.facebook.com/anomiezine. The second is to demand the established political parties listen to our concerns and offer tangible, workable solutions. Alternatively, we could organise a political party but, the system is rigged against us. The future is ours, but we need a community first to tackle the problems of the present.



“The precariat is today’s mass class, which is both dangerous, in rejecting old political party agendas, and transformative, in wanting to become strong enough to be able to abolish itself, to abolish the conditions of insecurity and inequality that define it”. – Guy Standing

How to resist concentrations of power: Anarchism in the FOSSeable future

Every major software company—including those who have offices based in Ireland—collects information on its users. This practice is not restricted to nominally free, "when the service is free you're the product", services (like Facebook, Google, and Twitter – all of which are explicitly advertising platforms, selling your information to businesses so they can target advertisements more effectively), but also paid-for services like Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Office, Netflix and Amazon Prime.

The purpose of this is obvious. Massive amounts of data is valuable to a massive amount of people. Advertisers, governments, corporations, suspicious spouses, insurance companies, your employer—basically everyone who might want to exercise power and control over you have an interest in the data you produce.

The problem emerges when you give this data freely, without checking what you're handing over. If you search "what is that weird lump on my left testicle?" on Google, your insurance company (who will actively buy such data from Google) might take this to be indicative of declining health and raise your monthly premiums. This is the problem of capitalism as a responsive economic system.

Another problem emerges when a few people hold all the information about all the people, including you! The concentration of data corresponds with the concentration of power and tech companies now have a "trickle up" (from "everyone" to "someone") method of data collection that is extremely effective. Data sources are numerous and vary in how surreptitiously they operate – but the result is the same. This is the problem of capitalism as a unifying political system.

“The open source nature of the Internet is both a blessing and a curse, because just as much as we can watch what’s happening around the world, we can also be watched”.
- Alicia Garza

This data-structure mirrors, exactly, the power-structures in our society. The vast majority of people willingly (to a greater or lesser degree) consent to state authority, and the state monopoly of violence. Power, just like data, is concentrated – and this is no coincidence.

Power needs data in order to perpetuate itself, and more data means more effective and totalising perpetuation. Challenges to authority are anticipated (just as market trends are anticipated), and dealt with using a data-based approach. Data acts as both a warning of, and cure for, dissent. So how do we disrupt this current mode of data collection, distribution, and aggression?

Many software developers are now opting to create programmes and platforms that follow a FOSS (Free Open-Source Software) model. These structures are often (indeed, usually) federated, thus avoiding the problem of data concentration (data is held "locally" – either by the service user, or by the community (node) in which they participate). The federated structure means there isn't a "white guy in a shirt and tie" sitting on top of everything, collecting information about the service users, and disseminating this data in accordance with their (his) interest.

Further, because of the "open" nature of the model, the software is available for free, and – importantly – is completely transparent in what it is doing. You could see if you were inadvertently pressing "transmit" each time you logged-on.



“Software is like sex: it’s better when it’s free.” – Linus Torvalds

Most people who use FOSS are tech nerds. Historically speaking, FOSS has not been very user friendly – if you couldn’t use a command terminal there was very little point in using a Linux-based operating system. But this is changing, and changing quickly. Several platforms have been established explicitly as counter-power (and, importantly, counter-surveillance) to the established order of establishment software with many now mimicking (and often improve upon) the familiar – proprietary – software.

Using FOSS is good praxis, and it’s good praxis for no fewer than two reasons. Firstly, if you stop using proprietary software, proprietors stop having access to your information, and are unable to collect data about you or use you as an access-point for collecting information on your comrades. Essentially, you stop being a cop. Secondly, FOSS is the model for a future we want to see. We want people to participate in a life they consider worthwhile. FOSS is empowering. Communities can self-form and there’s nothing to stop you exploring various aspects of your being, there are certainly no economic hinderances (it is, after all, [actually] free – if you want to start an online community for black, wheelchair – bound, lesbians who have an active interest in Japanese art (and if you want people within your community to meet certain criteria, and behave in a certain way towards each other), there’s nothing to stop you from using the (pre-written) source –code (indeed, this is actively encouraged) and creating such a community. The nature of FOSS is collaborative, not competitive – both economically and socially. *You* set the rules for your community and if people break them, you can kick them out. If people don’t like them, they can leave your community and form their own.

It’s time we left the community of proprietary tech.

By James W. Anderson

Seize the memes of production

From Trump to Bolsonaro it is clear that when our drunk uncles took to social media, like Christmas, they would find a way to ruin it. Recently the common grounds we call the internet has been the sphere of ever more attacks by big business and governments.

The left has once again conceded ground on our natural territory. This time bussing jokes and being sarcastic. There have always been right-wing nutters online but for a long time, they were too busy writing Ayn Rand fan-fiction to bother us much. So why the influx of the past years? Most people don't trust traditional media and as someone that has studied and works within it, I can attest that it is the completely correct view to have. The papers have fostered the very events that has let "fake news" flourish. If you claim that the Clintons are the only hope for representative democracy, then why should anyone ever believe anything you print ever again. From hacking dead school girls phones to papering innocent people over the front page and lambasting them as morons, they look around and keep shouting at we plebs "WHY DON'T YOU TRUST US".

In the tumbling faith of legacy media, a surge of dark money and other buzzwords have rushed to fill the void for the meltituted.

Building on the groundwork the right-wing press has established they use simplest emotive stories and pictures that are easily shared. Or "memes". Lets put aside the etymology of memes for this article as Richard Dawkins is as intelligent as he is getting on with Christians. There are many reasons that the right has seen a surge recently and I'd be hesitant to blame the internet, but it certainly hasn't done much to stop it. But what the right has always been good at doing is pushing out clear simple and emotive narratives. Are a lot of the narratives incredibly stupid and easily countered, yes? Does that work? No.

Often the right is setting the agendas and we are scrambling for the perfect retort. The "ahh got yea with facts" libs are clearly not winning the battles for hearts and minds. Once you've entered a discussion on Jewish power in the Weimar Republic, you've already lost, because they will distort the facts and have no problem doing so to fit their views. Surely the correct argument would be "why do you need to hate the Jews for your ideologue to function"?

“This video was a joke to upset my girlfriend not to encourage anti-semitism or encourage hatred towards jewish people”. – Count Dankula

As the Remain camp found during the Brexit referendum it is near impossible to counteract clear and undiluted bullshit. And let us be fair, the right often has an ingenious way of arguing. Often their childlike refusal to accept the facts and evidence of their wrongdoing is so off footing we simply shrug and walk away.

So, what can we do? Obviously, I'm not saying making more memes is going to sort anything. It is just a very small part of a very large problem. But we have plenty of solutions to everyday so why are we not getting these messages out there in simple and emotive ways?

One of the reasons that right-wing memes can spread quicker and faster is they are often based on abstract concepts. For instance, they might say "all black people are lazy and don't work and Liam Neeson should beat them up". It's intangible, nebulous and will confirm people's biases. The usual counter to this blatant stupidity

is with facts and figures, which bores the shit out of most people. As any philosophy student will attest, deductive arguments don't really have the desired effect when you are arguing with your better half about who paid for the taxi at three in the morning.

We also try and humanise the situation; putting a human face to tragedies, telling their stories to those that need to hear it. But for that to work, the recipient requires empathy, and those in power don't have a lot of that going around. Neither of these approaches lend themselves to easy memeing.

The simple fact is the right are happy to flood the press and the internet with so much ideological bullshit that all we desire is to disconnect from it and not engage. Funny pictures are never going to change the world, but if they are coupled with a coherent method and strategy they have the ability to push the messages further.

If you feel the need to engage with the right online, never be reasonable, take everything down to their level or preferable below their level and confuse them with your own bullshit. The time is ours to take back the city, then take back the internet.

Anomie Aunt



When life in a pointless and chaotic world gets you down, write in to our resident Anomie Aunt, Fiachra O'Brien-O'Connor-Ohhhhh-myyyy!

N.B. I don't employ gender pronouns, so if needed use 'sex-positive-woke-enigma' instead of he/she/they.

P.S. My DMs are well lubricated if anyone wants to meet up for a regional Pale Ale in a dingy bar that serves Gluten Free Vegan Chicken wings.

Comrade Anomie Aunt,
My girlfriend has given me an ultimatum that if I don't get a job she will dump me. Thing is, while I really love her, I'm an Anarcho-Communist and don't want to become a mindless wage slave. What should I do? Regards. "Suspicious Pants Stains"

Yo Anomie Aunt,
I really need your help! I've been banned from Twitter and Facebook for posting memes of Zionist pig-dogs that have been labelled "antisemitic" by both social media platforms! This must be a huge conspiracy against me and all free-thinking socialists, because Jeremy Corbyn re-tweeted all of them. Best wishes "I prefer bagels without cream cheese, thank you"

A chara Anomie Aunt,
With the Brexit omni-shambles in Westminster and the non-functioning executive in Stormont, what are the chances of a United Ireland coming about soon? One additional question, if the Brits hold up a referendum, would a new bombing campaign be welcomed down south?... I'm asking for a friend. Thanks! "West Belfast Diplomat"

Greetings Anomie Aunt,
I am part of a Feminist collective based in Manchester. You rarely talk about women's issues or have a letter from a woman on your column, why is that? Do you hate women? Are you best friends with Harvey Weinstein? I will unmask you! Best wishes "Ironic Buffy The Vampire Slayer Fan"

That's a tough one "Suspicious pants stains". I found myself in a similar relationship imbroglio in my misbegotten 20s. I'll give you the same advice my polyamorous triple parent-set gave me then: "Why are you telling us this during our tantric sex workshop?" If that isn't clear enough, I hear Piers Morgan needs someone to squeeze his anal glands every Wednesday night. Pip-pip!

Ouch, that's a tough situation "I prefer bagels without cream cheese, thank you". But I have a question back at you: Why are you on Facebook and Twitter? Have you not heard of Hysteria? It's a new social media platform started by the SWP. All the cool Lefties are hanging out there these days. What's not to love: 24/7 Momentum posts, a virtual-gallows for instant online character assassination, and you can watch a live stream of Noam Chomsky droning on about American Imperialism. No need to thank me.

Is that you Sheamy? If so, I need to borrow some fertiliser from you. But, to the matter at hand. To put it simply "West Belfast Diplomat" it depends on what you mean by the word Ireland. Because if words can have multiple meanings then Ireland can easily be swapped for the word Kingdom, in which case, Yes, we will have a United Kingdom in the future. Hope that clears that up!

Did we meet during the siege of Millbank in 2010? In which case, I am sorry I kept your DVD copy of Wuthering Heights. Well "Ironic Buffy the Vampire Slayer Fan", there is only one thing to say in response to your accusations. Yes. Like most men I don't like women. To learn more watch my self-funded documentary "Why all my problems are caused by women not fucking me enough".

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ANOMIE

